Pan Africa Project Network

162. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have offered Pan Africa Project Network for the development of communication system in African countries;

(b) if so, the details of such countries;

(c) the estimate expenditure to be incurred in this regard;

(d) by when the project is expected to be completed; and

(e) the extent to which India shall be benefited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All 53 member State of the African Union.

(c) As of now, the estimated expenditure to be incurred in US$ 67.3 million over a period of five years.

(d) The project involves installation, commissioning , operations and maintenance of the network. Installation and commissioning will be completed within 18 months in a phased manner, depending upon the speed of response from individual African countries.

(e) The project would earn considerable goodwill for India throughout the African countries, It would help in showcasing India's advancement in the fields of satellite and information technology. Once the network is in place, it is expected to open up futher opportunities for India in the new areas of IT applications like remote sensing, e-commerce, etc.

Provision of wireless Internet connectivity

163. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to provide wireless Internet connectivity in the country;

(b) the projects proposed to be undertaken by Government and private companies in this regard; and

(c) the details of the coverage available so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under the license agreement for provision of Internet Service, last mile linkages within local area are freely permitted to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) by radio communication subject to clearance from Wireless Planning & Co-ordination (WPC) Wing of Department of Telecommunications to avoid frequency interference. A number of ISPs, including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limtied (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), are already providing Internet service to their subscribers using various technologies including wireless medium. In order to promote Internet and Broadband services using wireless, use of low power equipment has been delicensed by the Government in the frequency band 2.4 to 2.4835 GHz for indoor and outdoor applications with specified technical parameters. Also, indoor use of low power equipment has been delicensed in the frequency bands 5.150 to 5.350 GHz and 5.725 to 5.875 GHz with specified technical parameters.

(c) Under the license agreement for provision of Internet service, no target has been specified for the licensees for coverage of Internet service including wireless Internet. It depends upon the business decision of the licensee.

Charges of Limited Mobile Phones

164. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently issued a notice under which Fixed Wireless Phones (FWPs) which were treated as Fixed Phones have been reclassified as Limited Mobile/WLL (M) phones;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware that after the issue of this notice, persons calling limited mobile/WLL (M) phones from BSNL lines have to pay almost triple the charges; and